

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 24, 2000

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 4, 2000

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 2193**

---

---

**Introduced by Senator Soto**

March 16, 2000

---

---

An act to add Section 14016.11 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to Medi-Cal.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 2193, as amended, Soto. Medi-Cal.

Under existing law the State Department of Health Services is responsible for the administration and oversight of various health care programs, including the Medi-Cal program.

This bill would require the department to create a Medi-Cal public inquiry unit. The public inquiry unit would be required to respond to Medi-Cal eligibility rule ~~inquires inquiries~~ and to correct eligibility interpretations, determinations, and beneficiary computer files. ~~The public inquiry unit would also be required to provide Medi-Cal eligibility training to counties to maintain error control rates below federal tolerance levels.~~

This bill would require the department to provide the public inquiry unit with toll-free telephone access with specified capabilities and hire additional employees.

This bill would require the Department of Finance to approve *the additional* funding *necessary* to implement and maintain the public inquiry unit.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 14016.11 is added to the Welfare  
2 and Institutions Code, to read:  
3 14016.11. (a) The department shall establish a  
4 Medi-Cal public inquiry unit within its eligibility policy  
5 development branch.  
6 (b) The public inquiry unit shall be responsible for all  
7 of the following:  
8 (1) Responding to ~~inquires~~ *inquiries* from the general  
9 public and counties regarding Medi-Cal eligibility rules  
10 and processes.  
11 (2) Correcting eligibility interpretations,  
12 determinations, and beneficiary computer files if the unit  
13 determines that the county has incorrectly interpreted  
14 program rules or made incorrect determinations *after the*  
15 *unit has contacted the county and provided an*  
16 *opportunity for county level correction.*  
17 ~~(3) Providing training on Medi-Cal eligibility rules~~  
18 ~~and processes to counties to maintain quality control~~  
19 ~~error rates below federal tolerance levels.~~  
20 (c) The department shall provide toll-free telephone  
21 access to the public inquiry unit to be used by the counties  
22 and Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries, and their  
23 representatives. Callers requesting information relating  
24 to subjects other than Medi-Cal eligibility will be referred  
25 whenever possible to the appropriate jurisdictional  
26 authority. The toll-free access shall have the capacity to  
27 answer all calls ~~personally with no longer than a~~  
28 ~~five-minute waiting period.~~ *personally.*  
29 (d) To staff the public inquiry unit, the department  
30 shall employ a staff services manager, a minimum of six  
31 associate staff services analysts, and sufficient clerical staff  
32 to respond to any written inquiries ~~within 10 days of~~  
33 ~~receipt~~ *received* by the department.

1 (e) The Department of Finance shall approve the  
2 additional funding necessary to implement and  
3 efficiently and effectively maintain this unit.

4 (f) Nothing in this section is intended to diminish  
5 current staffing levels within the State Department of  
6 Health Services' eligibility policy development branch.

